

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5073

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 12004

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, XX

SUBJECT: NSSM 243-MAAG REQUIREMENTS STUDY

REF: STATE 249431

1. I FIND NONE OF THE THREE OPTIONS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL VERY SATISFACTORY. OPTION ONE (PARA 5A REFTEL) SEEMS TO ME A NON-STARTER, GIVEN CONGRESSIONAL INTENT AND TEMPER. OPTION 3 (PARA 5C), IF I UNDERSTAND IT CORRECTLY, APPEARS TO RUN AN EQUAL RISK THAT IT WILL BE SEEN BY CONGRESS AS AN ATTEMPT TO EVADE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES, ESPECIALLY THE THREE-MAN LIMIT. IN ANY CASE, I DO NOT SEE THE NEED IN VENEZUELA FOR SEPARATE "MILITARY GROUPS" TO HANDLE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS. THERE IS NOT REALLY VERY MUCH IN THE WAY OF MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES BEYOND SECURITY ASSISTANCE BROADLY DEFINED WHICH WOULD REQUIRE GROUPS SEPARATE FROM OSA (AND DAO). SEPARATE MILITARY OFFICES OR GROUPS WOULD BE CONFUSING AND UNTIDY.

2. WITH REGARD TO OPTION 2 (PARA 5B) I CANNOT REALLY JUSTIFY A MANNING LEVEL OF 19 FOR VENEZUELA, WITH IMET AND FMS CREDIT TERMINATING. ADMINISTRATION OF

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ASSISTANCE, CASH SALES, ETC., WOULD NOT REQUIRE THAT

MANY PEOPLE. THAT MANNING MAKES SENSE ONLY IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE WIDE SCALE ADVISORY EFFORTS, AT UNIT LEVEL AND HIGHER. THAT IS WHAT MOST OF OUR EFFORT IS NOW. I DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE CAN OR SHOULD CONTINUE THE IN-COUNTRY ADVISORY EFFORT AT THE SCALE WE HAVE, OR THAT WE SHOULD MAINTAIN RELATIVELY LARGE IN-COUNTRY MISSIONS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

3. IN DETERMINING WHAT KIND OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PRESENCE WE DO NEED OR SHOULD HAVE, I START FROM THE PROPOSITION THAT WE MUST PRESENT TO THE CONGRESS A NEW CONCEPT AND RATIONALE. IF WE TRY MERELY TO GIVE GROUND SLOWLY, AND TO COME UP WITH GIMMICKS OR NUMBERS GAMES, WE WILL ALMOST SURELY INVITE CONGRESSIONAL IRRITATION AND ACTION. THEREFORE, THE CAUSAL SEQUENCE OUGHT TO BE FROM CONCEPT TO MANNING AND NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

4. WHAT I PROPOSE IS A MILITARY PRESENCE THAT IN ESSENCE FUNCTIONS AS A SMALL GENERAL STAFF LIAISON/ADVISOR/ OMBUDSMAN GROUP. BASICALLY IT WOULD CONSIST OF A FEW OFFICERS, WHOSE JOB WOULD BE FIGURATIVELY TO SIT ALONGSIDE THE TOP STAFF LEVEL IN THE MINISTRY AND THE VARIOUS ARMED FORCES TO ADMINISTER CASH SALES, TRAINING, ANY TAFTS, ETC.; TO PUT TOGETHER PACKAGES OF ASSISTANCE IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUESTS; AND GENERALLY TO ACT AS A "GENERALIST" ADVISOR, EXPEDITOR AND OMBUDSMAN WITH REGARD TO MATTERS OR PROBLEMS THE HOST MILITARY MAY WISH TO BRING UP. SUCH A GROUP WOULD BE PERSONAL LIAISON/ADVISORS. IT WOULD NOT HAVE A SEPARATE ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTER OR ORGANIZATION (LIKE CURRENT MILGRPS), OR BE TASKED BY USG WITH LARGE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS. IT WOULD HAVE MINIMAL LOCAL STAFFING. FOR THIS CONCEPT TO WORK THE GROUP WOULD REQUIRE VERY QUICK AND RESPONSIVE BACKSTOPPING BY WAHINGTON AND SOUTHCOM, I.E. THE CAPACITY TO CALL UP MTT'S OR PUT TOGETHER OTHER KINDS OF AID PACKAGES QUICKLY.

5. IN SHORT, I AM SUGGESTING AN OSA, BUT I
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BELIEVE THAT A THREE-MAN OFFICE WOULD BE TOO SMALL FOR THE KIND OF COMPLETE LIAISON AND BACKSTOPPING I BELIEVE WE WOULD NEED HERE. I CONSIDER A 6 TO 8 MAN STAFF WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PERMIT ASSIGNMENT OF OFFICERS TO EACH SERVICE AND HAVE AN OVERALL COORDINATOR. (UNDER THIS CONCEPT I WOULD ELIMINATE THE ADVISORY SERVICE NOW EXTENDED TO THE NATIONAL GUARD.)

6. ACCORDINGLY, MY RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE TO
SEEK CONGRESSIONAL ACQUIESCENCE IN A MORE FLEXIBLE
STAFFING FOR OSA'S TO PERMIT THIS LEVEL OF MANNING
AND IN EFFECT THIS NEW CONCEPT. I BELIEVE IT CAN
BE JUSTIFIED. IF SUCH LEEWAY IS NOT GRANTED, THEN
I WOULD MOST RELUCTANTLY CONCUR IN THE THREE-MAN OSA.

7. WE DO NOT KNOW IF GOV WOULD FUND A TAFT THROUGH
FMS CONTRACTS. THEY MIGHT WELL PURCHASE ADVISORY
SERVICES FOR SPECIFIC AND AD HOC MATTERS, BUT OUR
GUESS IS THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE WILLING TO FUND
AN ON-GOING PERMANENT FORCE.
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